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ERVINUS ZIRBES.
JOHN'S SEMINARY.

LENT

AND ITS

Observance



By the
Rev. Joseph J. McAndrew

Nihil Obstat:

REV. T. E. DILLON

Censor Librorum

Imprimatur:

✠ JOHN FRANCIS NOLL, D. D.,

Bishop of Fort Wayne

No. 97

Second Edition 10,000

Printed in U. S. A.

OUR . SUNDAY . VISITOR . PRESS
Huntington, Indiana



LENT AND ITS OBSERVANCE

THE first page of history records God's first precept to man:—"of the forbidden fruit thou shalt not eat"—and the terrible consequences of its violation. Because thou hast eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat, cursed is the earth in thy work,. . . in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth out of which thou wast taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return."

It is with these solemn words the Catholic Church ushers in the season of Lent. "Remember man," she warns, "That thou art dust" because men are so prone to forget whence they have come, whither they are going.

To understand the meaning of Lent as it is observed in the Catholic Church, it is necessary that we have some knowledge of the historical background for practices which to many may seem bewildering.

First—To all historians the Catholic Church is known and referred to as the "Old Church". But the Church is old not only in her origin and teaching, but also in her historicity. She is the vast storehouse of history that gath-

ers up the collective knowledge of the past and from it gives to mankind the results of experiments and experience, the science of political legislation, the character and passions of men. Like her Divine Founder, her experience in dealing with man has been as profound as it has been bitter. What a searching view she gives us of the human heart, its motives, its acts, its incentives, its springs of actions. She awakens the sleep of the dead and presents them before us; untouched by the besom of time herself, she shakes the dust from antiquity and familiarizes us with the past. She leads us from the crib to the cross, ever teaching us the sublime lessons these unfold—mortification, self-restraint, self-denial. She ever warns us of the dangers of self-indulgence.

Many Saints

If at times She has had to bow her head in shame at the impious behavior of some of her favored children, even as Christ wept over Jerusalem, His chosen and favored city, She still points with pride to a galaxy of noble and saintly men and women who in every generation have heeded her teachings and have consecrated their lives to the foolishness and folly of the Cross.

Never permitting herself to be educated out of sympathy with the needs of every age, she at the same time retains her identity with the past as is evidenced in what

the world ever recognizes as her most gorgeous, fascinating and beautiful ceremonies. In this way the Church unites the present with antiquity. Through her liturgy, the public prayer of the Church, we are linked as it were with the first born, and as we follow along in its course we can mark the simplicity, beauty and sublimity of the dawn of the Christian world, its early history and primitive practices. The ceremonial of the Church is her baptismal robe, we might say. She ever wears it, not that man may admire her youth, but rather that they may become acquainted with her age as she reveals it in her religious rites.

The "Why" of Lent

To understand correctly the "why" of Lent, as observed in the Catholic Church, it is necessary that we have some idea of the reason for practices which otherwise might be regarded as religious vanity, a mere spectacle or a pious pageantry designed solely to arouse the emotions. When you witness a ceremony, such as takes place during a baptism, marriage, funeral, or the Mass, you are naturally curious to know what it is all about. What you really witness here is a miniature picture taken as it were from a chapter of the early historical life of the Church.

Remembering that the Church began her life and growth in centuries when customs, language,

modes of architecture, food and dress differed vastly from what we find today in modern Christian life, men will not be astonished at what they see, for through her liturgical observances the Church maintains and expresses ancient life and reveals in visible form—by means of vestments, architectural design, sacramentals and by practices, many of the customs that surrounded her crib. Here is found a reason also why there are different Rites in the church and why the church has never maintained a principle of uniformity in Rite. It is because each rite retains in it the observances, early practices and customs which in one rite may be merely indicated while they are more pronounced in others. Hence we hear or read of the Latin Rite, Byzantine Rite, Coptic Rite etc. For example, one seeing a priest vested for Mass according to these different rites would wonder at the strangeness and diversity of dress. But when the reason for such variation is understood, men will appreciate better what is meant by the historicity of the Church and what this means to men.

Dress of Christ's Time

Each vestment aside from the rich religious symbolism it expresses conveys also to us some idea of the mode of ancient civilian dress, that civilian dress of which ours today is but an abridgment, better perhaps to say, judging

from the scantiness of modern attire, a curtailment. Our Lord used no strange garments when preaching His doctrine but used the civilian dress of His time. So the Church unites in her religious observance the civilian garb of the time when she came forth from the hand of God. Thus is the historical antiquity of the Church retained and maintained in her dress as well as in His doctrines. And she determines by legislation the rites and ceremonies that are to be used in administering the sacraments and imparting her multifarious blessings to people and things. These rites and ceremonies by which the sacraments are bestowed have been ordained by the Church from the earliest days of Faith, as her Lenten observances indicate.

Why Forty Days?

The duration and fast of Lent was not always kept in the manner in which we find it observed to-day. No doubt the example of Moses, Elias, and the forty day fast of Our Lord, as well as the forty hours His Body was in the tomb, must have an influential factor in determining the number of days. Quadragesima (forty days), of which the Teutonic word Lent, is a translation, was always regarded as a period given to fasting and praying, that the great Feast (Easter) might be holily and devoutly observed. But there was a great divergence of practice. For example in the 5th century

Lent lasted six weeks, but as Socrates the historian remarks, there were only three weeks of actual fasting, exclusive of Saturday and Sunday. But the number forty, being once established, some thought that not only should people fast during these days, but the forty days should be actual fasting days.

Modern Observance

During the pontificate of Gregory the Great (590-604) in Rome there was six weeks' fast. Six days of each week being fast days. This St. Gregory with many others described as the spiritual tithing of the year, thirty-six days being approximately the tenth part of three hundred and sixty-five days. In order to realize the exact number of forty days Ash Wednesday was designated as the first day of the forty days' fast. But that the former custom might be remembered as an ancient practice, the Church of Milan (Ambrosian rite) even to this day adheres to the more primitive practice.

The first day of Lent, now Ash Wednesday, is so called from the blessing and distribution of the ashes. Ash Wednesday has been observed as the beginning of forty days' fast at least from the seventh century. It takes its origin probably from the ancient practice which required the primitive Christians who had grievously sinned to clothe themselves in sack cloth and be sprinkled with ashes,

and to do public penance. The custom of public penance in time became obsolete. But the custom of putting ashes on the head remained.

Today in every parish ashes are blessed and put on the foreheads of the people. The ashes used in this ceremony are procured by burning the palms which were blessed on the previous Palm Sunday and which were carried in procession on that day. All this ceremony has a long historical existence and a deep spiritual significance.

What the Palm Signifies

From the earliest times, as history testifies, palm was regarded as an emblem of peace. The people were wont to acclaim a conquering hero, carrying palm branches in their hands. Palm was always given to one who conquered in battle.

The inhabitants of Jerusalem met Jesus on His entry into the city carrying palm in their hands, and they saluted Him as King of Peace. Sometimes the saints in heaven are represented with palm in their hands to signify that in their combats here below they conquered not armies but themselves.

But the burnt palm has also another significance. Reduced to ashes, it typifies a sinner estranged from God. Such a one can no more regain friendship with God by his own natural power than it is possible for the burnt palm, now

ashes, naturally to come back to life and again become verdant.

The palm, however, is not totally destroyed. The ashes remain, so those who are in sin are not lost beyond redemption. Although now because of mortal sin dead to God, they can be restored to grace and peace by penance as were Magdalen, Peter, Augustine and innumerable other penitents who came with contrite and humble hearts and firm resolve to rise with Christ from the grace of sin.

“Vanity of Vanities”

The burnt palms draw our attention to another valuable consideration. They remind us of those things to which many dedicate their lives, pleasures, temporal goods and selfish comfort. These things do not last. They are what the wisest of men called the vanity of vanities.

Listen to his words: “I said in my heart, I will go and abound with delights and enjoy good things; I made me great works; I built me houses, I planted vineyards, I made gardens and orchards, and set them with trees of all kinds, and I made me ponds of water, to water therewith the wood of the young trees. I got me men servants and maid servants and had a great family; and herds of oxen and great flocks of sheep above all that were before me in Jerusalem. I heaped together for myself silver and gold and the wealth of Kings and of provinces.

I made me singing men and singing women and the delights of the sons of men; cups and vessels to serve to pour out wine; and I surpassed in riches all that were before me in Jerusalem; my wisdom also remained with me. And whatsoever my eyes desired I refused them not, and I did not withhold my heart from enjoying every pleasure, and delighting itself in the things which I had prepared and I esteemed my portion to make us of my labor."

Emptiness of Temporal Things

One would naturally conclude from the litany of earthly pleasures enjoyed to their fullest that Solomon was happy beyond measure. But, he says, "when I turned myself to all the works which my hands had wrought and to the labors wherein I had wrought and to the labors wherein I had labored in vain I saw in all things vanity and vexation of spirit and that nothing was lasting under the sun." (Eccl. II.)

To remind us therefore of the emptiness of these things which many, despite Solomon's disappointment and God's warning, pursue relentlessly, the ashes are placed on the head in the form of the cross. They are placed on the head in which reason is seated because pride, an intellectual sin, the mother of sin, that coils itself like a poisonous worm about the foundations of the soul, is the cause of all our woes and misery. It

has brought upon man all the afflictions to which he is heir. Through it Lucifer was drawn out of heaven; Adam and Eve because of it were banished from Paradise. Haman was expelled from his court. Nabuchodonosor was turned out of his palace and Saul the first King ever anointed died by his own hand. Pride hurled these from most sublime heights to the lowest depths. Humility finds that which Pride sought. Therefore the Church says, "Remember! thou art dust." A humble man knows his place, he stays on the ground, with his heart and mind ever raised to God; "as the lark that soars the highest builds her nest the lowest, as branches that are most laden with fruit bend the lowest, so Christians who are mindful of their last end are the humblest." Love of God makes us humble and humility makes us obedient. A coward can be wilful but it takes courage to obey.

Sign of Redemption

The ashes are placed on the forehead in the Sign of the Cross. The Church uses the Sign of the Cross in all her blessings that we may ever keep before us the sign of our redemption, for "The word of the Cross to them indeed that perish is foolishness; but to them that are saved, that is to us, it is the power of God." (I Cor. 1, 18). Indeed Scripture reminds us of this fact frequently. The Church does not act arbitrarily, therefore, when

she urges and commands her children to make use of it, for the Old Testament as well as the New, together with the early Fathers, refer to it with peculiar distinction and honor. Thus for example we read in the Book of Ezechiel, (Ezechiel, IX: 4, 6), that he (Ezechiel) having received a vision from God, in which was revealed to him the abomination that took place in Jerusalem, saw six men standing with vials of destruction in their hands. Among them was one with a horn of ink. The Lord said to him, "Pass through the city in the midst of Jerusalem and sign with Thau upon the forehead of men who mourn over all the abominations which are done in the midst of her. Then He said to the other six: "Go ye after him through the city and strike. . . utterly destroy old and young, maidens, children, and women, but upon whomsoever you shall see 'Thau' kill him not." (V, 6) St. Jerome (Commentary on Ezech. IX, 4.), says, "In the ancient form of Hebrew letters which the Samaritans still use (i. e. in his time) the last letter of the alphabet, 'Thau', is like the cross which is marked on the forehead of Christians and is often attached to a signature." Other early Fathers of the Church explain that the sign of the Son of Man means the sign of the Cross.

"Pass Word" of Christians

We may refer reverently to this sign as being the "pass word" of

the early Christians, by this mark they recognized one another, as Tertullian confirms:—"At every step and movement, whenever we come in or go out, when we dress ourselves or prepare to go abroad, at the bath, at the table, when lights are brought in, or lying or sitting down, whatever we are doing, we make the sign of the Cross upon our foreheads." (*De Corona Militis. Cap. III.*)

St. Hippolytus (A. D. 220) likens the sign of the Cross to the blood of the lamb with which the Israelites in Egypt sprinkled their door step as a sign that the destroying angel was about to pass by. He therefore exhorts the Christians always to sign their foreheads with the Cross as a protection against the assaults of the Devil. (*Apostolic Tradition*).

Its Widespread Use

Nor was the veneration for and use of the sign of our redemption confined to the Western Church only. St. John Chrysostom, one of the early Fathers of the Eastern Church, writes concerning the Cross. "As creation manifests the power of God, so the Cross of Christ shows us His divine power. Is there a house where the cross is not visible to the eyes, as a trophy erected against the devils as a safeguard for souls? It is placed upon our ships to be their pilot, on the walls of our cities to be their strongest rampart. Not a king but makes it the highest ornament of

his crown, not a Church which does not display it on its standard. Everywhere, he continues, is the symbol of the cross present to us. On this account we paint and sculpture it on our houses, our walls, our windows. We trace it on our brows and we studiously imprint it on our souls and minds." ("Sacramentals and Some Catholic Practices" by Cardinal Gasquet.)

The Church ever reminds man to keep the cross before him. The cross is the standard of the Christian soldier and like the warrior who honors and venerates the flag of his country and rejoices that it will be flung about his body in death, so the Christian soldier always places the Cross before him in his daily combat with the world, the flesh and the devil that it may inspire him, as it were, with a divine patriotism. He will die if needs be that the cross may never perish from his heart, his mind or his faith. Having been instructed and disciplined in the Way of the Cross, which he is urged to make frequently during Lent, he knows even though he has sinned grievously mercy awaits him at the foot of the cross if he will but do penance. Then he shall not die, says Holy Scripture, but live, for "if the wicked do penance for all his sins, which he hath committed, and keep all my commandments, and do judgment and justice, living he shall live, and shall not die." (Ezech. 18:21).

Inspires to Penance

The intention of the Church in marking the forehead with ashes in the sign of the Cross as she warns "remember man that thou art dust, and unto dust thou shalt return" is to inspire man to do penance by reminding him not to forget the past that thereby he may more humbly contemplate the future.

After the blessing with ashes the Mass is begun. In the Mass on Ash Wednesday, the Church prays . . . : "That we may begin the venerable solemnity of fasting with becoming piety and perform it with tranquil devotion."

Fasting is indeed venerable because of its age. The common acceptance of the term "to fast" denotes abstinence from food and drink and restraint in use of all those things which nature itself dictates for man's well being. Fasting is an act of temperance and as such it has its foundation in the natural law.

Temperance Is Moderation

Temperance dictates moderation and prudence, safety in all things through restraint. That this fundamental dictate may be rationally exercised in bringing our passions under subjection, positive law is needed to designate the time wherein or the days whereon this natural dictate is to be observed as well as the manner in which the obligation is to be discharged on days

authoritatively appointed. The first good that man should have done to show his love for His creator was to abstain. This was God's first precept to man, a venerable and solemn command.

Moses and Elias both fasted forty days. God glorified them by great miracles. Esther and Judith, two pious women of the Old Law, obtained great graces from God through fasting. The New Law finds the precursor of Christ beginning his mission with a forty days' fast. Our Saviour fasted forty days. Those whom God selected for a great mission began their work and strengthened their spiritual power by abstinence. Those who wished to accomplish great things for humanity sought God's favor by fasting.

Fast Was More Severe

The rigor of the early penitential fasts, different as to time and nature, was gradually mitigated. After the days of persecution peace reigned and the whole Christian world was united against a common enemy. But the Lenten fast was much more severe than it is today. St. Ambrose said, "men must renounce the world, abridge themselves of sleep which nature requires, and entreat the favor of God with sighing and mourning and earnest prayers and live so as to die to the use of this life and deny themselves and become wholly new men". . . . (De Paenit. L 2 C 10). This fast, he continues, was a total abstinence throughout the whole

season except on the Sabbath and the Lord's Day. (De Elia et Jejun. C 10).

Circumstances and conditions made a modification of these early practices necessary, so that the early Councils declared, "Let it remain in the power of the Bishops either to shorten the suspension of the truly contrite or to separate the negligent from the body of the Church. (Council of Lerida. C 5. Chalcedon C 21).

When in the days of St. John Chrysostom, some, becoming restive, complained that the time of penance was too long, lasting sometimes from one to three years, he said, "I require not the continuance of time but the correction of the soul. Demonstrate your contrition, your reformation, and all is done." (Hom. 14 in Can).

Definite Laws Required

As there was a difference in time, so also there was a great divergence in regard to the nature of the fast. Socrates gives us some idea of the practices in the 5th century. "Some abstain," he says, "from every sort of creature that has life, while others of all living creatures eat of fish only. Others eat birds as well as fish, because according to the Mosaic account of the creation they too sprang from the water. Others abstain from fruit covered with hard shell and from eggs. Some eat dry bread only, others not even that. Others when they have fasted to the 9th

hour partake of various kinds of food." (Hist. Ecc. V 22). Evidently from this account some were inclined to the extreme limits of rigor. Some definite legislation was required. Theodolphus of Orleans (8th century) regarded abstinence from eggs, cheese and fish as a mark of exceptional virtue. But at an earlier date St. Gregory writing to St. Augustine of England, laid down the rule which was to be regarded as the Common law of the Church. He writes, "We abstain from flesh meat and from all things that come from flesh, as milk, cheese and eggs."

Today each bishop exercises the power which the church prudently grants him. At the beginning of Lent, he sends to every pastor a copy of the Lenten regulations to be observed. These are read and explained to the faithful. Some are dispensed from the fast. But where the fast cannot be observed, such as are exempt are advised to do other good works such as to give alms to the poor, to make a contribution to some pious work, to attend Lenten devotions. This practice of dispensing was known in earlier centuries. Such dispensations were known in Germany as "Butterbriefe". For this reason one of the towers of Rouen Cathedral was formerly called the Butter tower.

Festivals Forbidden

The prohibition of eggs and milk during Lent is remembered in the custom that exists in some places

today of making gifts of eggs at Easter.

In the early church there was also a precept in regard to marriage which many felt had a close relation with the laws of abstinence, hence, in our day the church forbids the Solemnization of marriage during the seasons of Lent and Advent. The Church, be it understood, does not forbid marriage, but only the solemnization. Solemnization means the festive or extrinsic pomp of the ceremony which at other times of the year is displayed, but which is forbidden during these penitential seasons. The reason for this precept is probably based on the fact that in the primitive days of Christianity during the time of public penance, penitents were directed to abstain from the use of the marriage bed, as we learn from St. Jerome. "In time of fasting the bridegroom and the bride should sequester themselves from one another. . . . for he that says he does penance by abstinence from meat and fasting and alms in vain uses this speech except he go out of his chamber and make his fast holy and pure by adding continence to his penance." (In Joel C 2). Many early fathers reckoned this as a necessary part of self denial. St. Ambrose asks, "Does anyone think that to be repentant where a man is engaged in the ambitious pursuit of honor and indulgences himself in the use of wine and the marriage bed?" (De. Paenitent. L 2 C 10).

The Second Council of Arles (21) decreed, "that no man or woman should have liberty to marry while they are doing penance, and if they did, they should be rejected and debarred from entering under the roof of the Church. (C. 21).

All Must Do Penance

Asked today the WHY of Lent many of us would probably answer—we are all sinners, for God has said, "There is no man that sinneth not?" (3 Kings 8: 46). As a consequence are we not all obliged to do penance? For Christ had taught, "Unless you do penance you shall likewise perish." (Luke 13:3). These reasons are good, since penance is absolutely necessary for all without exception. It is necessary not only for what we are obliged to do during Lent but what we are obliged to continue to do during the year. Few even of those who live good lives do sufficient penance. To live laborious days, to fast, to pray, to chastise ourselves as St. Paul did, so as to bring our bodies under subjection by mortification and self renunciation, is not easy to the disorganized and rebellious nature of man. But there is another reason which men foolishly fail to consider, and which becomes the occasion for most of their tribulations, condemns them to misery and makes repentance necessary. This reason is suggested to us by the words of the Gospel of Ash Wednesday. The Church here warns that fasting alone is not sufficient, for Christ has said,

"When you fast be not as the hypocrites, sad. For they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. . . . more significantly, Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth, where the rust and moth consume, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither rust nor moth doth consume and where thieves do not break through and steal. For where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also." (Matt. c. 6). Those who neglect this warning, become pitiful victims of their own folly.

Cowardly Shun Responsibility

If to do penance be hard even to the godly, it becomes harder still when men have fastened their hearts to the world. Such are seized by a fear of living. They dread to make sacrifices, they fear the scowl of men, and laugh at the Commandments of God. They cowardly shun responsibilities and avoid risks and chances of struggle. They seek to escape from everything that is hard and which makes for charm and beauty of life. These would turn the warfare of life into a military parade and a perpetual distraction. No longer are such confounded with confusion but they walk boldly if not defiantly after Balim.

Lose Sense of Shame

They lose not only a knowledge of sin but with it a sense of shame. God has given them life and "brought them into the land of

Carmel to eat the fruit thereof. But in their mad pursuit after the inglorious good, They have defiled His land and have made of their inheritance an abomination, selling it for a mess of pottage." (Jerem.) They become slaves instead of free-men, casting themselves, as St. John Chrysostom says, "out of heavenly things they have no longer power to think of anything. Fearing lest their goods should be spent if they give alms, they fear, ignorant that what is spent in such will actually receive increase, for then the things of heaven shall be added unto them". . . .

"They even jest and trifle about divine truths, if they can in no other way shake off the gloomy vision of a future life, thus affecting to believe that there is no future to cause apprehension. Usuries and Loans, gain and ignoble traffickings become their chief concern. Worse than a slave they bring upon themselves the most grievous tyranny." Without fear or shame, they bury faith and gather around its tomb to see growing from that tomb the poisonous weeds of Communism, Atheism, Nudism. The "one thing necessary" ceases to be a factor in their faith and in their conduct, even the nobleness and liberty of man is forgotten. "Having held the law they knew it not. . . ." My people have done two evils, is the bitter complaint of Almighty God. "They have forsaken the fountain of living water and digged to them-

selves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." (Jerem. 2: 3:13). "When they knew God, they have not glorified Him as God, or given thanks; but became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened." (Rom. I: 21).

God Waits for You

God bitterly complains, God kindly admonishes, God constantly pleads with and patiently waits for men to turn from their ways of iniquity, to walk again the way of truth and justice; during Lent the Church emphasizes this plea. Will men listen? Every Lent offers new opportunities, brings other graces. Will men like repentant prodigals, return to God and humbly beg forgiveness? Some will. Others hearing will not heed because "they walk after vanity and are become vain."

Professing themselves to be wise, they become fools. So blind, so hardened in heart do they become, that they hate Christ and will hate Him without cause. They have no God but Caesar, "having changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of the image of a corruptible man." (Rom. I:23). The Cross to them is folly. Eagerly would they fasten their Saviour again to it and dance about it with diabolical glee, singing hymns of hate while casting lots for His garments. Attempting to strike a bargain between God and Mammon, they are not able to hear or to bear any of those things which concern their salvation, "for this cause

God delivered them up to shameful affections, . . . and a reprobate sense." (Rom. I:26).

Bound by Riches

As St. John Chrysostom remarked in his day, "they are bound like a dog to a tomb by the tyranny of riches, more grievously than any chain, barking at all that come near them, they have this one employment continually."

Nothing in modern times has brought greater havoc to nations and a more widespread misery to men than the craving of wealth. It is indeed "the root of all evil" not in the possession but in the misuse. It has destroyed for many the spiritual and moral beauties of life. It has broken homes, estranged brother from sister, parents from their children, and has prompted and promoted crime and has set nation against nation. But worst of all it has caused men to hate their Creator, despise one another, worship and serve creatures rather than the Creator. Their noblest act is selfishness. If man's original disgrace left him stripped of his pristine dignity, his modern debasement, selfishness, leaves him without honor, clothed in ignominy and shame.

Way of the Cross

In recent years we have been blessed so bountifully with material comforts; and comfortable inertia and sensual indulgence has been so strongly and so flagrantly endorsed by picture, pen and voice, that many Christians

have come to look upon their material gifts and blessings as the one and only end of life. For these does the Church pray—Return to thy God “for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and injustice of those men that detain the truth of God in injustice.” She urges constantly, “Be converted and live, you know not the day nor the hour wherein God shall require thy soul of thee.” Follow the way of the cross, she says, Behold your crucified Saviour. the victim of your sins. That men may never forget the Innocent Victim of their sacriligious folly, the Church has erected the Stations of the Cross, and during Lent especially she urges her children to follow Christ in His sorrowful journey to Calvary.

What They Symbolize

If the foundation of our present system of making the stations be not historically accurate in some details, yet once the symbolical character of so many of our devotions is understood and their aid to the spiritual life is duly appreciated, they can be used as stepping-stones to a higher and deeper source of grace without danger of corrupting religious belief and practice. Veneration is paid to them not because of any intrinsic worth in themselves but for what they symbolize and for that which they help to bring nearer to us. It is sufficient for us that they possess a certain realitive truth.

Dives and Lazarus may or may

not have lived. But when we meditate upon the lessons of this parable, it does not occur to us to press the inquiry whether it was founded upon an incident that had actually occurred. The spiritual lesson we learn, the beautiful thoughts the parable suggests and the spirit of penance it inspires are the real ends attained.

At the sixth station of the cross, for example, we stop to meditate on Veronica's meeting with Jesus. She offers Him a napkin with which He wipes His adorable face. It is true that perhaps some of the incidents may not be historically accurate, but it is equally true that they are most helpful to piety because they do raise the heart and mind to God, which is true prayer. This station so inspired the great Newman that he wrote as follows:

"The relief which a mother's tenderness secured is not all she did. Her prayers sent Veronica as well as Simon—Simon to do a man's work, Veronica to do the part of a woman. This devout servant of Jesus did what she could.

"As Magdalen had poured the ointment at the feast, so Veronica now offered Him this napkin in His Passion. 'Ah,' she said, 'would I could do more. Why have I not the strength of Simon to take part in the burden of the Cross? But only men can serve the Great High Priest now that He is celebrating the solemn sacrifice.'

"O Jesus let us one and all, minister to Thee according to our

places and powers. As Thou didst accept from Thy followers refreshments in Thy hour of trial, so give to us the support of Thy grace when we are hard pressed by our foe."

A Non-Catholic's Thought

From the French, translated by the Rev. E. Day, a non-Catholic minister, comes this beautiful thought concerning the same Station:

"I adore Thee Lord as I behold Veronica wiping with a linen cloth Thy sacred face bathed in sweat, in tears and in blood. She is not deceived by thy wan bruised face, Thy weary step, Thy soiled garments. It does not astonish her that Thou now dost realize the vision of the complete sorrow which afflicted the eyes of Isaiah, that Thou art the Man of Sorrows acquainted with grief, wounded and bruised whom the prophet confessed that he did not recognize. The love of Veronica is not mistaken in Thee, to her Thou art always—Jesus. Nothing stops her, neither the dense crowd through which she must break, nor the noise of the people, nor the presence of the guard, nor the disdainful glances of the Pharisees nor the stately progress of the public procession, nor the prancing of the horses, neither false shame nor the fear of death. She does not hesitate, she runs and touches Thee, and tenderly wipes Thy face, her hands trembling the while with holy fear; all

was impossible but she dared all, she has accomplished all.

Perfect Type of Humanity

“O Master in this scene Thou art the perfect type of all humanity, poor and suffering. And Veronica is the type of charity. While Thou art dragging after Thee Thy Cross little resembling the perfect man but rather as the Psalmist dares to say ‘a worm and no Man.’ Thou bearest in Thy person all the poor; but on the other hand, the least of the poor who suffer hunger and cold in our great cities bears Thy image, O Jesus, and recalls the practical teaching of Thy Gospel...

“More happy than Veronica whose trembling hand touched Thee but once, Christian charity is able every day and every moment to dry Thy tears, to wipe the sweat from the brow of the poor. Who will teach us to love Thy suffering poor sufficiently, who will teach us to regard their sorrows, to worship them as the sacrament of Thy passion? Who will teach us to see always beneath their features, disfigured though they may be by physical and moral misery, the features of Jesus?

“Who will give us the spirit of Veronica, her unquenchable hope, her irresistible courage, her conviction that she will succeed and the degree of love which we need to accomplish all that we have undertaken? Thou only, Divine Master, can enkindle in our souls flames of life which would fain devour all the evils of the earth and will not

die down in Thy Church while there yet remains one sorrow in the world." (Perrevye, Stations of the Cross. Translated by Rev. E. Day.)

Meditation Strengthens Love

Indeed to meditate on the Stations of the Cross develops a sublime love for the passion of Christ, which at the same time inspires thoughts of pity and repentance. Throughout the world today Catholics follow practically one uniform system of "making the Stations of the Cross." In doing so three things are required: 1. To meditate on the passion; 2. to visit the whole Fourteen Stations without any notable interruption; 3. to move from Station to Station unless physical condition prohibits. (Father Thurston—Stations of the Cross.) During Lent the Stations are made publicly at least once a week.

We now come to the Great Week of Lent, Holy Week as it is known today. As we observe this week, its ceremonies carry us back to the earliest days of Christianity. The ceremonies are long and varied because in them are contained lessons of primitive Christian practices and much of primitive civilian history.

Palm Sunday Services

The week begins with Palm Sunday. The services of this day begin with the blessing of the palm; one of the most memorable and beautiful liturgical services in the Church. This service dates back to the fourth century, but its precedent is found in the annals of antiquity. It

was always customary even amongst pagans to welcome conquering heroes with palms. Palm has always been used as a sign of victory.

In the early centuries palm was blessed in the one Church at which Mass was offered. Then a procession proceeded to the principal Church. For obvious reasons the practice could not be continued. Today while only one Mass is offered, the Church preserves in her liturgy the early practice for the Mass on Palm Sunday is practically two Masses, with but one Consecration. In later centuries Stations were erected at the Churchyard Cross, a short distance from the principal Church. The Cross in the Churchyard was usually decorated with evergreen. The procession then formed at the Cross and proceeded to the Church. There grew up with this practice a custom to scatter flowers or willow before the procession as it passed through the Churchyard. Laterly this practice was erroneously regarded as a mere respect for the day, without reference to the reason for the observance of the day itself, so that many people then decorated the graves of their dead as now with flowers on Palm Sunday.

Priest Represents Christ

The procession as now formed moves through the Church. It begins at the altar with the priest at its head. In former times it was the custom for the people to follow, but now due to congested con-

ditions and circumstances of varying character over which the Church has no control, the people remain in the pews holding Palm in their hands. This ceremony like that of Ash-Wednesday has a deep spiritual significance together with its great historical value. The priest through no blasphemous assumption represents the Saviour and leads the people. The people are reminded that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. We must follow Him. We are His sheep. 'My sheep', He says, 'hear My voice and I know them and they know Me'. (John 10:27).

The priest goes out of the Church. By this we are reminded that Christ left Heaven and became man that He might reopen to us the Gates of Heaven by His death and Resurrection. Palm being the emblem of victory, it belongs preeminently to Christ who conquered death and overcame the world and now reigns triumphantly King of Heaven and earth. For this reason the priest carries palm in his hands.

The people carry palm not only to honor Christ as a Conqueror but also that by following in His footsteps and by imitating His example, thus overcoming themselves and the world, they likewise will obtain the palm of final victory. Before the procession returns into the Church two chanters enter first. On the outside the Choir chants the Gloria Laus, while the sub-deacon knocks three times with the

Cross on the Church door. All this certainly must seem quite mystifying to those who may not know its significance.

Time of Redemption

The door of the Church signifies the gate of Heaven. Since the sin of Adam man was condemned to wander on the face of the earth, not like a mendicant who never knew opulence, but like a prince in search of a crown which he has lost. The time has come when he is to be redeemed from his wretchedness. The gates of Heaven were closed against him. The Cross is the key, as it were, that has now reopened them to him. The three knockings signify Our Lord's three years' public life, also His three hour's Agony on the Cross. The two chanters who remain in the Church represent the Angels who remained in Heaven after Christ came to live amongst men and become one of them. They on the inside then and the choir on the outside join in singing the Gloria Laus. Heaven and earth, as it were, joining in praising and glorifying God, those in Heaven represent the Church Triumphant, while those forming the procession on the outside represent the Church Militant, those, who by praising and glorifying God here, hope one day to enter with Him into Life Eternal "unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that cannot fade" (1 Peter 1:4.)

The chanters on the inside of

the Church, like the Angels who remained in Heaven, await Christ's return.

Christ's Triumphant Entry

The procession now enters the Church. This represents that great multitude of which St. John speaks "which no man could number, of all nations and all tribes, and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and in the sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands." (John Apoc. 7:9.)

The priest, representing Christ, signifies first Our Lord's triumphant entry into Heaven, as David said, "Thou hast ascended on High, Thou hast led captivity captive," (Ps. 67:19),—leading all the just who lived under the Old Law and who had been detained in Limbo. Second, it is to remind us that Christ will come again, not to die, but to judge the living and the dead.

Shall we then enter with Him into Eternal Glory—"Come ye blessed of My Father enter with Me into My Glory"; or shall we be rejected forever—"Depart from Me ye cursed into everlasting flames?"

Palm Sunday has another ceremony which to some may be confusing. Passion Sunday is the Sunday which preceded Palm Sunday, yet today not on Passion Sunday, the Passion is read. Then too, the Passion began on Holy Thursday, not on Sunday.

Reason for Ceremonies

The reason why the Church arranges these ceremonies according to the present order is because Christ had scarcely made His triumphant entry into Jerusalem when the same populace that loudly acclaimed Him King of Peace clamored for His Blood—Crucify Him—Give us Barrabas,—We have no king but Caesar. The Church wishes therefore to point out to us the fickleness of the Jewish people. And so the procession which had just ended is followed immediately by the reading of the Passion. We took part in the procession just completed, enthusiastically singing the praises of Christ. Shall we, too, within a short time return to mock, to insult, to scourge, to crucify Christ anew and to cast lots for His garments, to place again on His head a crown of thorns by our sins and fickleness of life!

What does our former praise of Christ mean, asks St. Peter, "if flying from the pollution of the world, through the knowledge of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we be again entangled in them and overcome, our latter state is become unto us worse than the former, for it had been better for us not to have known the holy commandment which was delivered to us." (II Peter 2:20, 21.)

The Priest's Actions

Another practice to be noticed, different from the usual procedure, is that the celebrant of the Mass

does not go, as is his usual custom, to the middle of the altar and there pray, that by "the blessing and grace of God, he may worthily and suitably announce the word of God." Instead he begins immediately to read the Passion. This unusual procedure signifies that having lost Christ by death on the Tree of the Cross all graces and help, as it were, are withheld from us, and without grace the gospel truths fall on deaf ears; we are like branches separated from the vine, incapable of producing the lasting fruit. Before reading the Passion the priest also omits the salutatio on "Dominus Vobiscum" which is always said before the beginning of the Gospel. The reason for doing so is to point out to us that as the Passion began, Judas saluted Christ—"Hail, Master, and He kissed Him." Mindful of this blasphemous act, the priest omits the salutation.—"The Lord be with you." For this reason too he does not kiss the book as he usually does when the Gospel is finished. By this ceremony the Church would warn us that many blessed by the Lord and loved as Judas was, betray Christ by turning nature's noblest mark of friendship into a treacherous mark of doom. What sorrow sacrilegious lips heap upon Christ in our day!

Holy Week Services

It is customary for the server of the Mass to say in the name of the people at the end of the

Gospel "Laus tibe Christi"—Praise be to Thee, Christ. This is not said when the reading of the Passion is completed to remind us of the many insults and blasphemies that were hurled at our Saviour during His terrible agony. Christ said nothing, He was patient, meek and was led like a lamb to the slaughter. We are thus reminded that those who follow His example are often victims of calumnies, they are spat upon and persecuted, called idolators as Christ was called a blasphemer, a wine bibbler, the consort of sinners. The true Christian, like St. Paul, deems it an honor to suffer persecution for Christ's sake.—"If they have persecuted Me, will they not persecute you also?" "Is the servant greater than the Master?"

Following Palm Sunday comes Maundy Thursday, Holy Thursday, or "In Coena Domini" as it is variously called. Maundy reminds us of the ceremony of the washing of the feet—and is taken from the words of St. John "Mandatum novum do vobis"—a new commandment I give you. (John 13:34). It is called Holy Thursday because on this day, In Coena Domini, the Lord gave to men the Sacrament of His Body and Blood.

On this day it was customary amongst the early Christians to wash the feet of one another and also to receive Communion in the evening after supper. (At all other times they had to receive

fasting.) Perhaps this was done in imitation of the Communion of the Apostles at the Last Supper as may be learned from the Third Council of Carthage. "The Sacrament of the Altar should always be received by men fasting except on one anniversary day, when the Lord's Supper was celebrated." (Apud Cod Afri—C 41 Latine) St. Augustine also tells us that on that day Mass and Communion followed the evening meal. "Some", he says, "who could not fast received Communion in the morning, others who maintained an all day fast received after the evening meal." (Ep. 188 Ad Januar. C 7.)

Is Recognized Today

This early practice is recognized in the service today. The priests do not offer Mass privately. They communicate together at one table, i. e., at the public Mass which was formerly read by the Bishop.

The day has a note of joy. The vestments are white, the Gloria in Excelsis is sung and the bells are rung and the organ is played, then silence is observed until Easter Eve, or Holy Saturday. All this because Christ promised not to leave us orphans, and He was now to institute the Sacrament of His love as He had promised and of which He said "if any man eat, he shall not taste death forever."

The note of Joy, therefore, arises from this thought. Silence follows to express the deep sorrow of the Church during the time of Christ's

suffering and death; she drapes her statues and veils the crucifix in penitential colors, not only to emphasize her sorrow during these tragic days but also to remind us that when the Jews had reviled Christ and blasphemed Him, He hid Himself and went out of the temple never to return again. Reference to these ancient happenings in our Lord's Life is intended by the Church to arouse in sinners a deep sense of contrition and reverence for the sufferings of their Saviour, also to remind us that through stubborn pride and moral perversity men drive Christ out of their lives never to return again.

Expressions of Sorrow

The Church likewise shows outward expression of bereavement by withdrawing the lights during Tenebrae service. The Church is darkened, hence the name Tenebrae. At the Mass a second Host is Consecrated, then borne in procession to a repository. It remains there until the next day, Good Friday, when it is returned and consumed at what is called the Mass of the Pre-Sanctified. Up to the time the Church instituted a special and solemn feast, Corpus Christi, Holy Thursday was observed as the real feast of the Blessed Sacrament. On Holy Thursday the oils are blessed also, because in the early Church Baptism was usually administered at Easter time.

To understand the service of

Holy Thursday better, we must also know the day's relation to Good Friday which carries us back to primitive times.

Good Friday Services

The services on Good Friday open with what was formerly called the Mass of Catechumens. The Mass as we have it today is composed of two parts, each part being directly connected with the pristine Christian practice. The Sacrifice of the Mass is and always has been the supreme act of Catholic worship, and around this Sacrifice cluster all the teachings, all the gorgeous ceremonies of the Church, all the devotions of her people throughout the ages. The Mass had its birth in the Cenacle. Between the first Mass celebrated at night in the Supper Chamber with a little group in attendance and Mass celebrated today in our vast Churches with large congregations, there is a vast distance in time. The Sacrifice remains the same, but the ceremonies are such as to preserve the character of the origin of the early sacred rite.

The first part of the Mass goes back to the Synagogue service of the Jews. After these had become Christians many of them continued like our Saviour Himself to observe certain pious practices, such as the reading of the prophets, chanting of psalms and saying prayers. Being Christians the Gospels and Epistles later became part of their services. This be-

came eventually the first part of the Mass, or that portion of it which preceeds the Offertory as we celebrate it today. At first it had no connection with the Eucharistic sacrifice.

Mass of the Catechumens

The Catechumens or converts were permitted to assist at this service, i. e., Eucharistic ceremony, but were dismissed when the time to offer the Sacred Mysteries had come. This service in the course of time became united with the Eucharistic service. During the first part of the Mass, the Catechumens at the invitation of the deacon were invited to pray silently. The congregation prayed for them. The deacon mentioned the petitions and suggested the intention for which they were to pray. Hence today we hear the deacon at the Mass say 'Flectamus genua.' (Let us kneel) followed by 'Levate' said by the subdeacon meaning 'arise'. After each petition the faithful responded 'Kyrie Eleison'—Lord have mercy. This formed the primitive part of the litany. Today we hear the litanies chanted in a more extended form. The most ancient form of intercession is here found in the Mass.

The priest solemnly appeals to the congregation to pray first for the Church, then the Pope, then the bishops and priests, deacons and the orders of the hierarchy. A prayer is said for the ruler, the Catechumens, heretics, schismatics,

for Jews and pagans. After the deacon had invited all to kneel, he formulated a prayer for all. This is also the oldest form of public prayer. Following this begins the service known as the adoration of the Cross. This is a rite in itself and is very ancient as we learn from Atheria who made a pilgrimage in the Fourth Century to the holy places. He describes the ceremonies of Good Friday as these were observed in the Church of Golgatha, Jerusalem. The services we observe in the Church on Good Friday today differ little from the ancient practice. The verses, antiphons and responsories of the Cross are called Improperia or Reproaches. These were addressed by Christ to the Jewish people and they form what may be truthfully called the most tragic episodes of the Good Friday devotions. Much of this formerly was acted in the Church. It is true drama and suggested the mediæval passion plays. Today the remains of this ancient practice is observed in the chanting of the passion by three deacons.

A King's Example

Later the adoration of the Cross came to be called "Creeping to the Cross". What edification was given his people by the saintly King Louis of France in performing this devotion together with the humblest and poorest of his subjects. Today we do not creep to the Cross but make a triple genu-

flection as we approach the Cross and bow down in shame and confusion to kiss the bruised and broken body of our Crucified Saviour.

When the adoration of the Cross is finished a procession is formed and proceeds to a side chapel where reposes the Host consecrated and reserved since Holy Thursday. During long hours of the night a holy vigil has been kept by the faithful and now as the procession returns to the altar a beautiful and ancient hymn is sung—"Vexilla Regis prodeunt"—"The Standard of the King comes forth". Having come now to the altar the priest consumes the Host in what is known as the Mass of the Pre-Sanctified, which is really no Mass. The prayers and ceremonies were originally part of the great vigil. The Church in these ceremonies of Holy Thursday and Good Friday simply unites, as it were, historically and liturgically the Mass with the sacrifice of the Cross. Nothing in the Church and but little in history is entirely lost. This may be further seen from the composite character of the services of Easter Saturday, or the Great Sabbath, as it was anciently called, or Vigil.

Easter Saturday Services

These services comprise several rites and in order to understand the elaborate ceremonies we must distinguish these rites.

First the ceremony begins with

the blessing of the new fire. This formerly was struck from flint. The blessing of the Paschal Candle and incense follows. Then comes the reading of the prophecies, the blessing of the baptismal font. After the litanies are sung, Mass is offered. This was originally said at the break of day Easter morning. The litanies are histories in themselves. Short petitions that were originally offered in behalf of those to be baptised. Invocations have been added from time to time which are not only prayers of petition, but they often also remind us of some historical fact—e. g., during the World War the petition "Queen of Peace" was added to the Litany of the Blessed Mother.

Historical Background

These rites are not the result of chance. They have a real historical connection. The blessing of the new fire is an observance that probably spread from the Celtic ritual. When new fire is struck a candle is lighted, from which in turn other candles are lighted. Historically considered, the Roman law required that civil authorities be preceded by lighted torches. This was afterwards adapted by the Pope and Bishops who were preceded by seven acolytes. To some this looks like vain pomp but it really is retaining the history of the early ages. Symbolically it simply means that Christ is the light that came into a world buried

in a cesspool of human prevarication and darkness. Christ spoke of Himself frequently as the "light of the world—and a light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world". He spoke of His apostles who were illuminated by Him as "a light that shineth on a mountain". Christ is the Father of light. The Church uses light as a symbol of Christ whose teachings enlighten the minds of the faithful and purify their hearts. For fire purifies and cleanses as well as illuminates.

The Paschal Candle

Light too plays an important part in the life of man, as must the fire of charity in his spiritual life. The history and spiritual significance of the Paschal Candle are likewise of ancient origin. Huge wax torches were used in ancient Rome when celebrating some great event, or in welcoming the return of a hero.

The service of Easter Saturday together with those of Good Friday, were parts of the vigil service of Easter. Formerly people gathered and remained in the church praying, singing psalms, etc., at the conclusion of which the initiation of the catechumens who were found worthy after a final examination or scrutiny, were baptized. Expressions such as we find in the "Exultet" sung during the blessing of the Paschal Candle remind us that these services were conducted while it was still night or early morning

—“Haec nox est, O vera beata nox” etc. This is the night, the blessed night in which Christ broke the chains of death and ascended conqueror of hell. The prayer and canon of the Mass contain expressions plainly showing that the Mass we celebrate Easter Saturday was really the Mass celebrated early Easter morning immediately after the long vigil. No Mass was celebrated Saturday.

Symbolizes the Risen Christ

The Paschal Candle symbolizes the Risen Christ, the light of the world, the Illuminator of those who were baptized. who were called Illuminati. It takes its origin undoubtedly from the splendors of Easter celebration as it was observed in the primitive Christian centuries. “Constantine,” Eusebius tells us, “transferred the night of the vigil into the brilliancy of day by lighting throughout the whole city pillars of wax while burning lamps illuminated every part so that this vigil was rendered brighter than the brightest day.” (IV., XXII).

The Risen Saviour had conquered the world and had come to be acclaimed by His own. The five grains of incense inserted in the Paschal Candle recall the five sacred wounds retained in the glorified Body. The light of this candle with the new fire is symbolic of the Resurrection.

It is quite noticeable that most of the exercises of Easter Saturday are directed especially to the

newly baptized. The prophecies, tracts and prayers which we read today were read originally for the instruction of those about to be baptized. These contained the principal points of Christian Doctrine. The creation, the deluge, the trial of Abraham, the passage of the Red Sea. There are passages also from Isaias and Baruch which refer to baptism and allusions from Exodus, Jonas, Deuteronomy and David to baptism, the Pasch, and penance. Propitiatory prayers and prayers of impetration were said; these constitute the basis of the Litanies and are found beginning all the Litanies which the Church prays today. The saints who are invoked have proved themselves God's friends, and as we seek the assistance of friends here to aid us in our needs, so we implore the saints to intercede with God for us. This is an ancient practice in the Church.

Be Risen With Christ

The Epistle of the Mass which is taken from St. Paul's letter to the Collossians is also addressed to the newly baptized and points out the reward given to those who faithfully serve God. "If you be risen with Christ seek the things that are above where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God; mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth. For you are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ shall appear who is your life, then

shall you also appear with him in glory." (Chapter 3.)

And now we come to the great Day, "the day the Lord hath made", Resurrection Day or Easter Sunday as it is popularly known. Easter, a word derived from East or the Latin word, Oriens, reminds us that Christ is the true light that cometh out of the East and appeareth even unto the West, as the sun rises in the East and blasts the darkness that enshrouds the night, bringing health and vitality to the order of nature, so Christ bursts forth from the tomb of death and darkness to which the sins of man had condemned him, that the light of His teaching might illumine the world and enlighten men and give them new life here and lead them through the darkness by the light of His faith unto life everlasting.

Custom of "Dressing-up"

In modern times Easter has become more or less a season for the introduction of new fashions when people put on their best and up-to-date clothing. The clothes might be modern but the custom is not. It goes back to antiquity. After long dark days of penance done in sack cloth and ashes, the penitential robes were put aside for more joyful attire, on the day of Resurrection. People put on their best to show that they had risen with and put on Christ. The newness of dress was an indication of newness or spirit. Dressing in new

clothing was done also to honor the day itself. Today people clothe in their best on Sunday, perhaps ignorant of the reason that prompted this. Sunday is observed now rather than the Sabbath because the early Christians did this out of respect for the day, for they remembered Sunday was the day on which Christ rose from the dead. It is for this reason also that Catholic people stand at the reading of the Gospel, viz. to pay humble homage to the Resurrection.

Unnatural Doctrines

Nineteen centuries have passed now since the first Easter morn. If during this long interval of time, evil days at times have come upon men, it has been because they have entrusted their noblest faculties to the whim of chance and caprice. Indeed, if today, as the future casts its dim outlines before us, we are blinded at the grim lurid picture that faces us or if we are feverishly excited by the strange phantoms that beckon to us, or if we are scared by the shrill hollow voice of communism and the ungodly agencies that call to us, it is due to the teachings of anti-Christian philosophies, that are as unnatural and deadly in their effects as they are godless and unholy in purpose.

Step by step they have led many away from divine truth through a heterogeneous melange of erroneous principles of every nature and kind, until now we witness the sad

strange combinations of truth and spectacle of man living like the brute creation without conscience and heedless of their eternal destiny. "Unless you do penance you shall all likewise perish", no longer has either appeal or meaning for these. To them the words of the prophet, "Every soul which will not hear the Prophet whom the Lord God hath sent shall be destroyed from among the people." (Acts III: 22), are nothing more than the sounding of brass and the tinkling of cymbals.

As we now advance to an epoch when, we hope, a new social system is in the making, let us pray that society, having squandered much of its Christian heritage in its mad pursuit after the inglorious good, will realize its sins and like Magdalen will run to the empty tomb on this Easter morn, and there, before the greatest pulpit in the world, renew its faith and love in the Risen Saviour. For if there is to be peace on earth and if society is to be clothed anew in the garments of spiritual vigor and material prosperity and taste again of the fatted calf, it must humbly place its arm around God and with tender affection confess, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee." Then and only then "shall society walk worthy of God in all things pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." (Col. 1:10.)

